

A Message from Our Founder

In 2010, we will celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the founding of our preschool in San Jose. What a significant milestone for us! As one of the original founders of Mandala Montessori Preschool, I have had the opportunity to reflect on how we have grown and changed in the years since we first opened our doors here in the east foothills community of San Jose. In the spirit of Montessori, we wanted our preschool to follow the natural process of how a young child learns--as well as to reflect the ethnic and economic diversity of our area--and I am proud to say that we still follow those original principles.

I am also very proud of our nurturing staff at our preschool. They are very special people, many of whom have been here for ten, fifteen, and even twenty years. (That's almost unheard of in the early childhood preschool field!) The unique thing about our preschool staff is that they come into their work with open hearts, always wanting the best for children and families. Because of this, they are unusually responsive as children unfold and change. When a need comes up, they immediately move to respond to that need, whether it is through taking a class, talking with parents, or seeking outside services.

This is very different from many places that never change and seem to look exactly the same as they did 30 years ago. At Mandala, our basic values and foundations have remained the same, but we are constantly growing and expanding our knowledge. We have taken the Montessori philosophy and enhanced it.

As we learn what children need, we shift to meet that need. Our teachers trust the integrity of the child's ability to learn. They support that and never manipulate it. That's what is so unique about Mandala as a preschool - it's our "responsiveness" and our always seeking the best for a child.

Our mission statement is "Nurture the child. Support the family. Nourish the staff." It describes our original vision in 1975, and it is still the cornerstone of our program at Mandala Montessori Preschool today. As I complete my 35th year at Mandala, I am retiring as Administrative Director and am moving into the role of Mentor to the new Administrative Team. Each of the members of the Administrative Team is committed to the original vision of the school. Because of this, I know that Mandala will continue to thrive and care for the children, parents, and staff of the school.

❖ Marilyn Drino, *Administrative Director*
August 25, 2010